

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

410/03

Chicago Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Arrests 21 Criminals in Lake County

CHICAGO, Ill. – Fifteen convicted alien sex offenders and six other criminal aliens have been arrested in Lake County by agents of the Chicago Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), with the cooperation and assistance of the Lake County Sheriff's Office and the Waukegan Police Department.

This multi-agency initiative, dubbed Operation Stolen Virtue, is a comprehensive effort to locate and arrest criminal alien sex offenders and aggravated felons residing in Lake County and remove them from the United States. Fifteen of the 21 criminals arrested since the operation began Tuesday have been convicted of sex offenses against minors, with the remainder possessing extensive criminal histories that involve drug trafficking, firearm offenses, domestic battery, and other violent offenses.

Today's arrests are the result of the ongoing proactive enforcement initiatives to target foreign-born sex offenders, street gang members, and other violent criminal aliens in the western and northern suburbs of Chicago. Since 1997, ICE agents have apprehended 485 criminal alien sex offenders and over 3,000 violent gang members.

"Our agents are working hard to get foreign-born sex offenders and other violent criminals off the streets of our communities," said ICE Interim District Director Cynthia O'Connell. "We are working closely with state and local law enforcement to enforce our nation's immigration laws and improve the public safety of our cities and towns."

Lake County Sheriff Gary Del Re praised the recent operation. "This is yet another example of the results that can be achieved when federal and local law enforcement authorities combine their resources. Our agency remains committed to the task of ridding our communities of such predators."

Artis Yancey, Deputy Chief of the Waukegan Police Department, was also pleased with the results of Operation Stolen Virtue. "We are grateful for the cooperation and resources provided by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Lake County Sheriff's Department in our continuing effort to make our city a safer environment for families."

On March 1, 2003, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) transitioned into three separate bureaus within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is responsible for immigration enforcement in the interior of the U.S.

###